

June 12, 1972

Mr. Carlyle A. Thayer
The Australian National University
The Research School of Pacific Studies
Box 4 P.O. Canberra A.C.T. 2600
Australia

Dear Mr. Thayer:

I apologize for not answering your January letter long before now. Unfortunately, it got sandwiched among some papers on a very different topic. I rediscovered it more or less by accident and hasten to forward this rudely belated reply with the hope that the reply catches up with you somewhere in your travels.

Your thesis topic is indeed an interesting one. Documentation, as you doubtless well recognize, is not going to be all that easy to come by. Even when obtained, as you doubtless also recognize, it will not be very easy to handle. On matters as controversial as the founding of the NLF, the fact that an allegation appears in writing somewhere does not necessarily make that allegation true, and this applies even to statements made by persons (who may claim to have participated) that such and such a meeting took place in village x at time y with persons a through q taking part. All of us who work in this field need to remember the moral behind the old tale of the foreigner who asked the Chinese sage why the latter was drinking rice gruel, only to be told that since said sage's religion forbade the ingestion of solid nourishment, what was in the sage's cup was therefore, by definition, tea.

Much if not most of what you are looking for is more likely to be found in Vietnam than anywhere else. The current situation in Vietnam does not provide an optimum climate for disinterested scholarly research. Nonetheless, when or if you visit South Vietnam

I would suggest you solicit the GVN's assistance; since without at least its benevolence, you are not likely to get very far. Your best point of initial contact would probably be Mr. Hoang Duc Nha, who is President Thieu's Private Secretary (in the British cabinet officer sense of the word). Mr. Nha is young, affable and fluent in English. He can open (or shut) many doors for you. I would suggest you write him in advance, outline your project and background, and ask if you can call on him soon after you arrive in Saigon. A letter addressed to Mr. Hoang Duc Nha, Office of the President of the Republic of Vietnam, Saigon, RVN would be sure to reach his desk with minimal delay.

If or when you get to Washington, I would be delighted to see you and find out how your project is going. You have my home address. My home telephone number is

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Again, my apologies for the tardiness of this reply. I hope your project goes well and look forward to reading the published results.

Sincerely,

George A. Carver, Jr.

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11 January 1972

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE: 72-012

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Mr. George A. Carver, Jr.

Dear Mr. Carver,

Thanks to the efforts of Craig Mathews I have finally found a suitable mailing address by which I can write to you. As Mr. Mathews has probably already told you I am a PhD candidate in the Department of International Relations at the A.N.U. My thesis supervisors are Dr. Robert O'Neill and John L. S. Girling and my topic is on the origins of the "National Liberation Front of South Viet-Nam, 1954-1960."

Sometime around March of this year I hope to embark on seven months of field work. My present plans include stopovers in Viet-Nam, France, the United States [Washington, Cambridge, New Haven, Ithaca, Santa Monica] and Taiwan [where Douglas Pike has an enormous document collection]. In advance of my trip I am trying to arrange the proper contacts who could be of assistance to me. My main problem at the moment is in locating the proper officials and departments which hold materials on this period, especially captured documents and interview transcripts with defectors and prisoners.

I consider your article, "The Faceless Viet Cong," [Foreign Affairs (April, 1966)] a vital and most important contribution to the understanding of this period. The article obviously relies on the kind of material which I would like to use in writing my dissertation.

Since my thesis will view Viet-Nam as a case study in the beginnings of a Communist insurgency I am more concerned with what went on before the formal declaration of the founding of the so-called "National Liberation Front," than with what took place subsequently. Your article covers the main points in this process and it is my intention to go into greater detail. Perhaps by listing the kinds of questions I wish to answer you can see the kind of material I am after. I am including page citations to your article as it was reprinted in

Wesley R. Fishel's Vietnam: Anatomy of a Conflict (1968).

1. I would like to document the orders and functions of the network of Communist cells which were left in South Viet-Nam after the agreements were reached in Geneva in 1954. [pp. 319-320].
2. I would like to get detailed information about the 3,561 weapons caches discovered in South Viet-Nam between September 1954 and June 1959; particularly the location of each one. [pg. 320].
3. I would like to document the 1956 instructions of the Dang Lao Dong to its southern network to begin agitation and political organization. [pg. 321].
4. I would like to document the information on Le Duan's alleged trip to South Viet-Nam in 1958. [pg. 322].
5. I would like to obtain a copy of the 1959 "Resolution 15" issued by the Dang Lao Dong Central Committee. [pg. 322].
6. Where can I find out about radio broadcasts from Hanoi (calling itself the "voice of the Liberation Front") which took place during 1958-60? [pg. 323].
7. I would like to locate the early bulletins of the Liberation News Agency which was set-up in 1960-61. [pg. 324].

As you can see I have many detailed questions about this period. I do not expect you to answer them in detail but I would like to know where I might look to find this information. Professor Lyman B. Kirkpatrick has written that he believes that Defense rather than the CIA would have these materials. However from correspondence with David Brown (INR) and Tom Conlan (now of the American Embassy in Canberra) it seems to me that the U.S. Government was not actually collecting this material at that time. Their suggestions included locating the appropriate GVN agency/department (Psy War?). Would you have any suggestions on this?

I would like the opportunity of meeting you personally when I am in Washington.

For your information: I am the son of a retired U.S. Army Colonel (USA '40)

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and have been fortunate to live abroad: Germany, France, Taiwan and Puerto Rico. I graduated from Brown University in 1967 with an A.B. degree in political science and had the fortune to take Kirkpatrick's course on Cold War operations. I wrote my senior honors thesis on the National Liberation Front of South Viet-Nam (230 pp.) under the direction of Professor King Chen. After graduation I served in Viet-Nam with the International Voluntary Services, Inc. (1967-68) and in the Republic of Botswana with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. I returned to the States in 1969 to begin graduate work and in 1971 I earned an M.A. degree in Southeast Asian Studies from Yale. At Yale I concentrated in political science and studied Vietnamese language for two years. I have participated in two intensive summer programs of Vietnamese language, one at Cornell in 1970 and the other at the Center for Vietnamese Studies, Southern Illinois University in 1971. While at Southern Illinois I also took an intensive first year Lao language course (I had previously participated in an intensive Thai language course at the University of Missouri in the summer of 1966). I took up my three-year research fellowship here in November, 1971.

I will thank you ahead of time for your assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Carlyle A. Thayer

Carlyle A. Thayer,
Dept. of International Relations.